

284th BSB – Friedberg, Giessen

Anticipation, excitement reign as Soldiers return

Story and photos by Alexandra Williams
284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Colorful welcome home banners and yellow ribbons mounted on almost every stationary object on Friedberg's Ray Barracks and the Giessen Depot are the dead giveaway — the redeployment of 1st Armored Division units is in full swing. The excitement is palpable.

"It's fabulous right now," said Daisha Cruz, facility manager at the Friedberg Fitness Center. "You can feel the excitement. And when you see the spouses you'll notice that they are glowing. It's a different world at the moment."

More women are working out in the gym lately to get in shape or to lose weight, she said. "They are nervous about their husbands returning and they want to look great when they come back. You can feel a lot of happiness, but also anxiety right now."

Getting ready for the returning Soldiers has had a positive influence on the general atmosphere on post, said Cruz. "All these banners that spouses have put up give the post such a happy look. It's fabulous — it needs to stay like this all the time."

Community is happier

"The community is definitely happier now," said family member Darlene Grillo. "The families have done an amazing job decorating the post, showing their Soldiers how proud they are of them and how much they've missed them. The kids' faces are happier too. When you see them they're smiling because they know their mom or dad will soon come

home."

No one is worried about the deployment being extended a second time as it was in April, she said. "Families are just waiting for their spouses to come home; they don't want to worry about another extension."

Another sign of the impending return is a spike up in the number of special orders at the Arts and Craft Center on Friedberg's Ray Barracks.

"We've been swamped with orders for balloons and banners in the past weeks, and our Summer Hires are slaving away getting everything ready," said Eric Danzeiser, center manager. "We also received a lot of Iraqi paintings at the shop that spouses brought over to be framed."

"Working on post you get to see a lot of the preparations. Some wives told me they are getting tattoos — something like love, peace and understanding — for their husbands. I've talked to three ladies who are getting a tongue piercing. Many are planning vacations once their husbands are on block leave, and some ladies who've worked here stopped working because they want to clean their houses," he said.

"At the same time there is a lot of frustration because they were independent for over 15 months and could make their own decisions. I know some of them are concerned about losing that independence once their husbands are back, or they're worried about whether their husbands have changed. We've already heard some stories about the first arguments and disagreements couples had. It's part of the deployment and we all know it's going to happen but it's still sad when you hear about it," Danzeiser said.

Groups of returning Soldiers have begun arriving daily on both installations. Regardless of the time of day, or night, excited family members are there to welcome them.

"I am very excited, but I am nervous at the same time," said Sarah Desiree Klier, the girlfriend of Spc. Juan Chavez of Company A, 16th Engineer Battalion. "Now that he is coming



Families of the 16th Engineer Battalion wait for the arrival of a group of Catamount Soldiers at the Giessen Depot. After being separated for 15 months many spouses described the moments before the arrival of the troops as the longest minutes of the entire deployment.

back I am wondering if he has changed. I am so happy that this deployment is finally over and he is coming back for sure this time."

Overwhelmed spouses

"I am just overwhelmed right now," said Regina King, wife of Staff Sgt. Norman King of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 16th Engineer Battalion. "My husband came home on emergency leave last July, but now he is finally coming back home. Waiting here for them to march in at any minute is almost worse than the 15 months before. It seems as if time is not passing by."

"Thank God he is coming home," said Elisabeth Jones as she waited for her husband, Sgt. Michael Jones of Company C, 16th Engineers. "I am so nervous and I have butterflies in my stomach. It's like going out on the first date."

Jones came home for Rest and Recuperation leave in November, then returned to Iraq for the duration of the deployment and its extension.

"It was so hard letting him go a second time," said Jones, who devised her own way of dealing with the extension. "I told myself

"OK, I have to wait a little longer. God has a plan for all of us, and the plan required that Michael has to stay in Iraq a little longer. As long as I knew he was safe I was doing fine."

Many wives are nervous because they don't know how the deployment has changed their husbands, she said.

"I know I've changed while he was gone — I lost weight. We communicated a lot so we know what to expect, but at the same time we know we still need time for us to get to know each other again."

Despite her joy, Jones still thinks about the families of Soldiers who died in Iraq. "I often think about the other wives and families who have lost someone. Their Soldier is not coming back. It must break their heart when they see how happy we are. I feel so sorry for them," she said.

When rear detachment Soldiers announced the arrival of the redeploying Soldiers, her husband among them, Jones had a hard time staying calm. "I just want to scream right now. You know, when the Soldiers finally march in here and I get to see my husband, I will just run up and down and scream 'Praise the Lord, the guys are back.'"



Friedberg Arts and Craft shop Summer Hire Charmony Jackson works on orders of welcoming banners.



Welcome banners, such as these at the 501st Forward Support Battalion motor pool, signal that the redeployment is in full swing.

Returning troops in between worlds

Soldiers' feelings mixed about redeployment

By Alexandra Williams
284th Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

During their 15-month deployment to Iraq the Soldiers of the Ready First Combat Team waited for the moment when they would finally return to their home bases in Friedberg and Giessen.

Coming home, however, is not as easy for Soldiers as it may seem. Just like their family members who have waited for their return, they experience a variety of mixed emotions that often last during the first days of reintegration, officials said.

"It feels good to be back, but you also feel somehow out of place. We've been gone for so long and it'll take a while to get back into the routine," said Spc. John Nehls, Service Battery, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment, during a reintegration briefing July 22.

Nehls and fellow Soldiers of the Gunner Battalion arrived two days before the briefing and have to undergo a reintegration process that lasts another five days, he said.

"We are back in Germany and

it's still unreal, but I'm slowly starting to settle in," he said.

"At first I was nervous when we arrived, but now it's a relief to be back. I love Germany and I love being back," said Pfc. Erik Couch, also of Service Battery, 2-3rd FA.

"I was scared because I didn't know what to expect. The post has changed and we need to get used to being back in Germany. The first few days were kind of stressful and irritating, but now we have adjusted," said one of the battery's NCOs, Sgt. Stephen Noble. "All I want to do right now is to have some drinks, spend time with my family, but also some time on my own."

"It felt strange coming back to Germany. We've gotten so used to downrange that it's almost unreal being back in Germany. At first I could not believe I was really back and that I wasn't just dreaming," said Spc. Matthew Metz.

"We returned two days ago, and the first night back we all went out and had a few drinks and just kicked



Photo by Alexandra Williams

Soldiers of 2-3rd FA register for the Installation Access Control System during a mandatory reintegration briefing. Briefings help ease the stress of redeploying Soldiers.

back. Some guys said they want to drink Germany dry, but of course that's not going to happen. It's just one of those things we joke about because we are finally home," Metz said.

Metz will undergo a certain kind of redeployment stress a second time in August when he flies home to get married.

"I am so nervous about going

home and I can't wait to see my fiancée again. We phoned and emailed whenever we could and I know she has not changed — she's still the same girl I fell in love with. When we come back to Germany we will have some time to experience Germany together. Right now I just can't wait to have her in my arms again," he said.

"I've tried not to get too excited about coming back," said 1st Lt. Erik Garrett of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 37th Armor. "I am very excited about all the changes on post; it changed a lot since we left."

Garrett and other Soldiers of 2-37th Armor returned to Germany in the middle of July and have been discovering the changes for the past few days.

"You feel excited, nervous, scared — there's just so much anxiety when you sit in that plane that brings you home," said Capt. John Moore, Company C, 2-37th Armor commander.

"I hadn't seen my fiancée in such a long time and I had butterflies in my stomach. I was so happy when I first saw her that I jumped up and down in the air. I didn't realize that I was doing it, but her family made a videotape of the reunion ceremony.

"I was so nervous about our reunion, but we've spent every free minute together since my return, and we just sit and talk and talk, and we still have so much more to talk

about. It's so good to be back and I am so proud of her," he said.

"You feel a lot of excitement and it was like, wow when we arrived on post," said Spc. Cole Von Roeder of HHC, 2-37th Armor. "When we flew over Turkey I was getting very excited because I saw that transition from everything being brown to everything being green, and it's even greener when you arrive in Germany. It's so overwhelming. There's no heat, no dust, the grass is green and it's raining."

"Right now we are enjoying what we worked so hard for. We go out, relax, walk around downtown and just enjoy being back in Germany," he said.

The reunion ceremony is an emotional moment for all Soldiers, whether they are single or married, said Von Roeder.

"It's very touching when you march into the gym. We arrived at 12:30 at night and you could feel the excitement when we walked in. Once the families saw us they went wild and started screaming. It was great."

The efforts Family Readiness Groups have made to decorate barracks rooms for single Soldiers are a special welcome back treat, he said.

"My bed was made with sheets from home. I kind of knew about it before because my dad gave the surprise away when I called him, but it still feels great to come to a room and someone made your bed. It makes you feel appreciated," Von Roeder said.

284th BSB – Friedberg, Giessen

Youths welcome newcomers to community

Share tips with new arrivals to ease transition

By Alexandra Williams
284th Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

Two Summer Hires of the 284th Base Support Battalion Inprocessing Training Center in Giessen are helping ease the move to Germany for young newcomers.

Ashlee Urzi, age 14, and 15-year-old Keefe Hetzler volunteered to be sponsors for a group of newly arrived teenagers when they learned families often bring their children to the ITC inprocessing class. They prepared a briefing for their peers which included details about child and youth programs in the BSB, schools and things to do for young people.

Urzi, who arrived in Germany in April 2003, discussed programs the 284th BSB offers to young community members. "I talked about Club Beyond and Youth Services and other programs, but also about the schools," she said. "I want to tell new kids what's here for them so they don't have to waste their time looking for it."

Hetzler, who has lived in Butzbach's Roman Way Housing since June 2002, prepared a briefing about school sports, things to do on the economy and programs of-

fered by the 284th BSB. "To me there is a lot to do in Butzbach, and I want to tell others about what's out there for them. I found things because I walked around with my cousin when we first arrived in Butzbach. You can save so much time when others tell you what's available for you," Hetzler said.

"I would have appreciated if someone had given me a briefing about the programs when I first arrived in country," he said. "I prepared a card with my phone number so that parents can give it to their children. When they call me they can ask me more questions, and if they like I will introduce them to other people."

Both teenagers said it's important to encourage their peers to visit the local downtown areas, they said.

"My friends and I often take the bus to go downtown Giessen. I don't speak German, but there's always a way to communicate. My favorite places on the economy are the Gyros places," said Urzi.

"I speak a little German, but very often people speak English, especially when you go to McDonalds. All the employees speak fluent English," he said.

Hetzler and his friends often go



Photo by Alexandra Williams

Ashlee Urzi (left) and Keefe Hetzler brief new families on child and youth programs offered in the 284th Base Support Battalion.

downtown Butzbach to a place where the local youths meet. That's how he found the best ice cream parlor, he said.

Both said that leaders should consider including a youth sponsorship program in the inprocessing briefings.

"We know what's of interest for young people when they first ar-

rive, and youth sponsors could also help them meet other teenagers," said Urzi.

The parents of two teenage boys who could not attend the briefing said they appreciated the detailed and honest information.

"This briefing helped quite a bit to find out what's available for young people," said Sgt. 1st Class

Michael Gersper of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 37th Armor. Gersper and his family just arrived in Germany and will be living in Butzbach's Roman Way Housing.

"Our boys are 15 and 16 years old and our daughter is going to be 11 years old shortly. They were kind of nervous coming to Germany because when you make a move in CONUS everything is similar, but when you move to a foreign country there are many questions. The idea to include teenagers in the briefing is great. Actually this is something that should be included at every ITC briefing," Gersper said.

"Ashlee and Keefe were such a big help," said Gersper's wife Sarah. "We asked both about teachers at school and what programs they like and which they don't like, and they gave us very honest answers which I think is important. Especially Keefe's information was important for our boys. He gave me his phone number so they can call him to find out more things, because I only asked the things that I thought were important. But of course my boys would ask different questions."

"They should really consider including youths in those briefings because they often view things differently than adults do, and they can provide them with all the information that young people need to settle in," she said.

Focus on driving safety

Officials warn: Drinking and driving don't blend well

By Petra Roberts
284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs
Office

Impaired driving affects one in three Americans during their lifetimes, according to a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic

Safety Administration.

Alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents in the United States kill someone every 30 minutes and injure someone every two minutes.

The study also revealed that in 2002, more than 17,400 people in the United States died

from alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents, 41 percent of all traffic-related deaths.

The numbers in these studies increase each year and apply to drivers all over the world.

Vehicle crashes in U.S. Army Europe account for almost 90 percent

of accidental fatalities to Soldiers stationed here so far this year, said Gen. B.B. Bell, USAREUR commander, in a recent message. Not all are alcohol-related, but driving under the influence causes a large number of accidents.

Take precautions

Soldiers who intend to go out drinking should take basic precautions in order to be safe, said Staff Sgt. Dennis Brown, operations sergeant with the 284th Base Support Battalion Provost Marshal's Office.

"There are three things you should do. Travel with someone and have a designated driver; always have enough money with you to be able to call a cab; and familiarize yourself with your unit's 'ride home program,'" Brown said.

"I cannot tell Soldiers often enough to always plan for a way home before going out and having a drink. Have the phone number of a friend who you can call with you. If all else fails, every Soldier can always call their unit."

Not everyone is listening up. In a recent period of five days, five vehicle accidents involving alcohol were reported in the 284th

Base Support Battalion, said Brown.

There are other dangers too.

Soldiers must keep in mind that vehicle fatalities remain the biggest threat to their safety and well-being. Driver safety remains the most important risk management target for military leaders. Everyone who operates motor vehicles must learn and practice defensive driving techniques. Remaining alert and identifying potential risks is the best way to avoid serious accidents.

Before you get behind the wheel, remember to:

- ✗ Pay attention.
- ✗ Recognize and avoid risky situations.
- ✗ Observe safe driving distances between vehicles.

✗ Always evaluate the "what-if" escape path.

✗ Concentrate on the road, and be prepared for anything to happen.

More safety information is available on the USAREUR Safety website at www.per.hqusareur.army.mil/services/safetydivision/main.htm.



Photo by Petra Roberts

Alcohol-related accidents not only damage vehicles but also injure and kill people.

284th BSB – Friedberg, Giessen

Community spotlight

Kudos to FRG volunteers

Members of the Family Readiness Group of Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery, extend their heartfelt thanks to Elain Sligh, Annegret Albrecht, Staff Sgt. Michael Saxton, Linda Baker, Christine Ancheta, the children of Tigger Playhouse Family Child Care, Ali and Audrey Ancheta, Spc. David and Daniela Feliciano, Lisa Durham and her Girl Scout troop, Jessica Leninger and the Rio Hondo Elementary School for helping prepare the rooms of the battery's single Soldiers. The volunteers donated various goods and spent numerous hours decorating single Soldiers' rooms to prepare them for homecoming from Iraq.

ACS seeks volunteers for various positions

Army Community Service offices in Giessen, Butzbach, Bad Nauheim and Friedberg seek volunteers for various positions. Requirements include being able to work flexible hours and days. Child care may be reimbursed. For more information call volunteer coordinator Kelly Kreis at mil 324-3713.

AFTB relocates in Butzbach

The Army Family Team Building office has moved to the Butzbach Outreach Center. A volunteer is needed to staff the new office. The following positions are available: AFTB instructor, AFTB administrative staff, AFTB publicity staff and AFTB master trainer. For details call Melody Sexton at mil 343-6240.

PSB office closed for Organization Day Sept. 2

All offices of Detachment C, 55th Personnel Support Battalion in Friedberg will be closed Sept. 2 in observance of the battalion's Organization Day and welcome home ceremony. For more information call

Warrant Officer 1 Jeffrey Gordon at mil 324-3602.

Substitute teachers sought

Giessen Middle/High School seeks substitute teachers for the new school year. Applicants can pick up an application at the school's main office. No specific experience is needed. The school also seeks volunteers for the School Advisory Committee and the Booster Club. Lunch monitor positions are also available for up to two hours per day. For more information call Marcia Smith at mil 343-7333.

PTSA seeks volunteers

The Bad Nauheim Parent Teacher Association seeks volunteers for the following positions: PTSA box tops chairperson, scholastic book fair chairperson and PTSA volunteer coordinator. For more information call volunteer coordinator Kelly Kreis at mil 324-3713.

National Night Out

The 284th Base Support Battalion Safe Neighborhood Awareness Program hosts a National Night Out Aug. 5 at 4 p.m. at Whiddon Park on the Giessen Depot to celebrate Military Police and community partnerships and to promote the prevention of crime, drug abuse and violence. Everyone is invited to enjoy free food, raffles, promotional products and safety information. Free activities for children will be available. For details call Luz Medeiros at mil 343-6500 or Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Brazzle at mil 343-8734.

Play at Alpine

My Joshua Productions presents the play "Secrets to Be Kept" Aug. 28 at 7:30 p.m. at the Alpine Catering Center's ballroom on the Giessen Depot. Tickets cost \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. Food and beverages will be available at the bar. For more information call civ (0175) 890 2507 or 890 2571.



Photos by Alexandra Williams

Iron Dukes and Gunners under new command

Lt. Col. John K. Tien takes the reins of the 2nd Battalion, 37th Armor Battalion, "Iron Dukes" in a ceremony held July 20 on the Parade Field of Ray Barracks in Friedberg. In his previous assignment Tien served as the deputy brigade commander for the Ready First Combat Team while the brigade was deployed to Iraq. Lt. Col. Pat White, the outgoing commander, is heading to Wiesbaden to serve as the G-3 for the 1st Armored Division. Photo right: Lt. Col. Joseph Harrington takes over command of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery "Gunner" Regiment, July 26 in a ceremony at the Donoho Field on the Giessen Depot. Before his arrival in Giessen Harrington served as the J-7 for the Joint Staff in Washington, D.C. The departing commander, Lt. Col. William Rabena, will serve as the senior fire support trainer for the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels.

Outdoor Rec trips

The 284th Base Support Battalion Outdoor Recreation office hosts a trip to **Warner Brother's Movie World** Aug. 7. The cost is \$49 for adults, \$29 for children age 4-11 and \$19 for children age 3 and under. A shopping trip to the **Czech Republic** takes place Aug. 14. The cost is \$49. A trip to **Amsterdam and Six Flags** is scheduled for Aug. 21-22. The cost is \$139 for adults, \$79 for children age 4-11 and \$29 for children age 3 and under. For details call mil 343-8202.

Outprocessing briefing

The next PCS/ETS outprocessing briefing takes place Aug. 10 starting at 10 a.m. in the ITC room in Building 4 on the Giessen Depot and Aug. 25 starting at 10 a.m. at the Old Ironsides Theater on Ray Barracks in Friedberg. Spouses are encouraged to attend the briefing. For details call mil 343-8077/6535.

Chapel barbecue

The Chaplains Office hosts a barbecue luncheon Aug. 20 from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Whiddon Park on the Giessen Depot (behind the MWR Building) in recognition of the Chaplains Corps anniversary. Everyone is invited for free food, games and prizes. In case of bad weather it will be held in the Giessen Chapel. Call Chaplain (Lt. Col. Robert Ford at mil 324-3408.

Skating in Giessen

Intersport Begro, located in the Schiffenberger Tal, next to Burger

King, hosts its weekly Tuesday Night Skating throughout the summer. The tour leads skaters from the Schiffenberger Tal, through Bismarckstrasse, Ostanlage, Kennedyplatz, Marburger Strasse, Wiesecker Weg, Ringallee and Wieseck. Every week skaters are led on a different route through Giessen. Everyone is invited to attend the free event, although skaters must be able to brake properly.

Getting fingerprints

Fingerprints are taken at the 284th Base Support Battalion Security Office located in Building 115 on the Giessen Depot, first floor. Walk-in service takes place every Wednesday from 1-5 p.m. To make an appointment for another day call mil 343-6623/7666.

Shipping cars

Americans overseas can get all the ins and outs on shipping a privately owned vehicle to the United States on the Internet. You can find the listed links on the Military Customs website at www.hqusareur.army.mil/opm/cars.htm. The U.S. Bureau of Customs and Border Protection offers tips on converting foreign vehicles to U.S. emission and safety standards, washing requirements to prevent spreading bugs and diseases stateside and tells you how to import a vehicle without paying duty. For people with foreign vehicles not built to U.S. safety specifications, the site has links to the latest list of registered importers that can convert foreign-specification vehicles to U.S. standards, the list of foreign

vehicles that can be converted, details on importing Canadian standard vehicles and the HS-7 Declaration Form required for vehicle imports. The Environmental Protection Agency also has a link listing the Automotive Imports Facts Manual, Independent Commercial Importer List, a "What's New?" section, Approved Canadian Vehicles and the EPA 3520-1 Declaration Form. The Department of Agriculture link explains why high standards of cleanliness are necessary for vehicles shipped stateside. More Customs information is available on the Internet at www.hqusareur.army.mil/opm/customs.htm or by calling the Giessen Customs office at mil 343-6017/6518. (Courtesy of U.S. European Command's Customs Public Affairs Office)

Bulk trash drop-off

Residents of 284th Base Support Battalion housing area are reminded not to place any bulk trash at the pickup points outside of scheduled pickup dates. Bulk trash can be dropped off at the Recycling Center located on the Giessen Depot at the end of the motor pool road. The center is open Wednesday from 8 a.m. to noon and 12:30-3 p.m., Friday from 8 a.m. to noon and 12:30-1:30 p.m. You can also call the Area Support Team office in Friedberg at mil 324-3100 or Installation Coordinator Office in Giessen at mil 343-6860 to arrange for an individual pickup. For more information call the Separate or Recycle Trash coordinator at mil 343-7161.

414th BSB – Büdingen, Hanau

Community notes . . . Community notes

Argonner Elementary highlights

Argonner Elementary School seeks substitute teachers, educational aides and lunch room monitors for the upcoming school year. Call the school at mil 322-8374 for details. The school will hold a new student and parent school orientation Aug. 15 from 9:30-11 a.m. The orientation is aimed at familiarizing students and parents with school programs, operating procedures, curriculum standards and more. If you haven't already registered or re-registered your child for school, now is the time, said school officials.

USO oriental dance, reduced hours

Hanau USO will hold a belly dancing class for beginners Thursdays Sept. 9-30. Cost is \$40. Sign up at the Hanau USO lounge, Building 9, Room 125 on Pioneer Kaserne. Bring slippers or gripper socks to dance in, not tennis shoes. The Hanau USO is open Monday through Friday from noon to 5 p.m. through Aug. 24. Call mil 322-8725, civ (06181) 56119.

Public Affairs Officer of the Year

Wolfgang Niebling, Public Affairs officer of the 414th Base Support Battalion, was honored as U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs Officer of the Year at a ceremony in Heidelberg July 19. Lt. Col. Amy Ehmann, 414th BSB commander, Niebling's family and staff were on hand as Lt. Gen. William E. Ward, USAREUR deputy commander, presented the award.



Kid's Korner

Enjoy a birthday package, state-of-the-art games and more at Wolfgang Shopping Center's new Kid's Korner in Hanau. Call civ (06181) 88-9013 for information on booking a private party.

AAFES jobs

American citizens can apply for Army and Air Force Exchange Service jobs in Hanau, Giessen and Rhein Main on the web at www.aafes.com. Interested local nationals should visit the Human Resources Office at the Wolfgang Shopping Center, next to Popeye's. It is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Or call civ (06181) 9584403.

Army Community Service

Hanau Army Community Service offers an **Employment Orientation** Aug. 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31 from 10-11:30 a.m. A **Dress for Success** seminar will be held Aug. 18 from 10-11:30 a.m. An **Interview Techniques** seminar will be held Aug. 19 from 10-11:30 a.m. Classes take place in Building 9, Room 104 on Pioneer Kaserne. For information call mil 322-9191.

Computer sign-up

All visitors to the Central Processing Facility on Pioneer Kaserne should report to Building 21, Room 10 for a computerized sign-in. All agencies monitor the sign-in list and page the next customer. Personnel IOP, finance IOP, installation access, ID cards, transportation, SATO travel, Housing (in/out processing), CLEOS and clearing papers/final-out at CPF all use this new electronic sign-in.

Alcoholics Anonymous

The Hanau Army Substance Abuse Program hosts Alcoholics Anonymous meetings every Wednesday at 7 p.m. in Room 327, Building 3 on Hanau's Pioneer Kaserne (enter the building at the first stairwell closest to the main street and proceed to the third floor, end of

the hall). For more information call Ken Petersen at mil 322-8911/8762.

EFMP meets

The Exceptional Family Member Program Support Network meets on the fourth Monday of the month from 4-5 p.m. at Army Community Service, Building 9 on Pioneer Kaserne. For information call mil 322-9275 or civ (06181) 88-9275.

Respite care

Respite care provides a brief time away for care givers responsible for special-needs children in the 414th Base Support Battalion. Call mil 322-9275 or civ (06181) 88-9275 for information.

Büdingen fitness

Enroll your child, 6 years old and up, for a Child and Youth Services sponsored tae kwon do class, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-7 p.m. at the Büdingen Fitness Center. The class costs \$35 per month. Call mil 323-3919/9144. Children must be registered at CLEOS.

Cardwell art class

Enroll your child, 9-17 years old, in a Child and Youth Services-sponsored art class, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5-6 p.m. at the Cardwell Youth Center. The class costs \$35 per month. Call mil 323-3919 or 9144 for more information and to register.

Basic car care class

Learn about basic car maintenance at Hanau Auto Skills every Wednesday at 1 p.m. Topics include changing your oil, fixing flat tires, checking fluid levels and brake pads for wear. The class fee is \$10. Call Hanau Auto Skills at mil 322-8247/8625 to sign up.

Hanau Community Spouses Club

The Hanau Community Spouses Club needs volunteers to help at their annual fall bazaar. Profits from the bazaar are donated to the 414th Base Support Battalion community in scholarships and donations to organizations that support Soldiers and their families. If you're interested in volunteering, email bianca.moton@us.army.mil or call civ (0160) 9105 2378.



Photo by Midori VanBrunt
Colton Smith, age 7, checks his egg that survived a drop down a firetruck ladder. It was wrapped in cotton balls and bubble wrap.

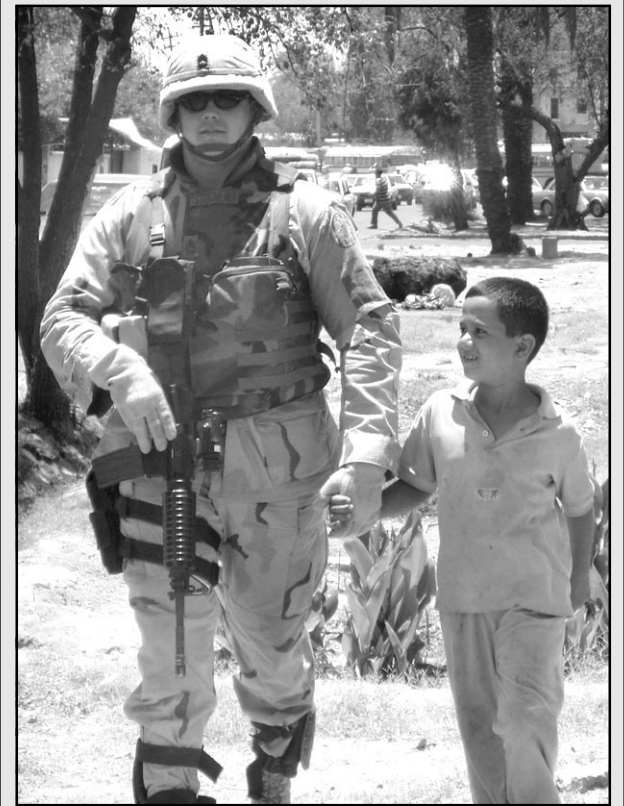


Photo by 1st Lt. Erik Archer

Making friends in Iraq

An Iraqi youngster spontaneously holds the hand of Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy Stogner while the 127th Military Police Company Soldier conducts a dismounted patrol of the Iraqi town of Khadamiyah. Members of the Baumholder, Darmstadt and Hanau-based unit began their year-long deployment to Iraq in late May and are currently based at Camp Ferrin-Huggins in Baghdad.

Egg drop contest

Cub Scouts from Hanau's Pack 49 and Babenhausen's Pack 71 celebrated their Cub Scout Day Camp with an egg drop contest July 10. Scouts launched about 30 eggs from a ladder on Hanau's Campo Pond. The eggs were carefully prepared and packaged so as to survive the fall from about a 30-meter height. In the end those whose eggs landed without breaking were awarded glow-in-the-dark arrowheads to add to their collection of beads earned during the camp.

National Night Out

The Safe Neighborhood Awareness Program presents National Night Out 2004. It will be held Aug. 3 at the Wolfgang Shopping Center from 2-7 p.m. Call Demetreia Watson at mil 323-2855, civ (06181) 180-2855 or email demetreia.n.watson@us.army.mil.

Hearts Apart Group

Meet others who have deployed spouses to share common experiences every Tuesday and Friday at 10 a.m. at Büdingen Army Community Service, Building 2207. Call mil 321-4786 or civ (06042) 80786.

New office

For Outdoor Recreation trip reservations, equipment rental and payments visit the new Leisure Travel and Equipment Rental Office at the Community Activities Center, Building 1355 on Fliegerhorst Kaserne. The office is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursday from noon to 8 p.m. and closed Saturday, Sunday and federal holidays. Call mil 322-6015 or civ (06183) 902-087.

414th BSB – Büdingen, Hanau

Summer Hires gaining wealth of new skills

By Karl Weisel

104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

Hanau youths are earning a little something extra in this year's Summer Hire Program.

Besides the usual job experience and cash garnered during the annual summer employment program, participants are being introduced to a wide range of related information and tools as part of the 414th Base Support Battalion's Summer Hire Professional Development Training Program. During weekly training sessions the young employees are being taught about workplace ethics, communications, customer service, interview techniques and a host of other job-related topics.

"They're taking a hands-on approach to teaching these children what it means to be part of the work force," said Lisa Bialzik, Summer Hire Program coordinator for the Hanau Civilian Personnel Advisory Center. "It's good training for them now and for the future when they join the work force."

"The goal is to provide them with not only job experience but also life experience skills," said Renee Tucker-Oppermann, administrative officer for the 414th BSB and Summer Hire Professional De-



Photo by Karl Weisel

Carlos Ramirez-Vazquez, Equal Employment Opportunity manager for the 414th Base Support Battalion, discusses workplace ethics issues with Summer Hire employees during a weekly training session.

velopment Training Program officer.

The idea originated with the 414th BSB commander, Lt. Col. Amy Ehmann, who wanted to offer interested youths a valuable work experience as part of the summer experience, Tucker-Oppermann said.

"I met with Jim Bruner from DoDDS [Department of Defense Dependents Schools] and together we drafted up a bunch of courses. We went out to the directorates and asked them to help us with the program and they volunteered. I've gotten assistance from everyone in

the BSB.

"We also set up training packets so that later on they can review the material covered during the training sessions," she said. "These are skills and courses that we, the regular employees, need, so we figured we may as well develop them early."

The program, open to nearly 100 Summer Hires in the 414th BSB and 104th Area Support Group, is serving as a pilot program this year for the close to 500 youths working in communities throughout the 104th ASG. "I'm hoping it will be adopted U.S. Army Europe-wide," said Tucker-Oppermann.

Relate to daily lives

Making students aware of how the various components of a BSB function to support Army operations was one of the initial goals, she said. "We had to make them understand the directorates and how they relate to their daily lives such as how the Directorate of Community Activities provides things like bowling alleys. Even if they don't gain anything else from this training, they'll have a better understanding of how a BSB functions."

"I learned a lot about discipline, being prompt, how to work under pressure," said Christel Lomahan, age 17, who was participating in Summer Hire for the second time. Her first experience was in 2002 working with Tucker-Oppermann at the 414th BSB. "This time I'm working for the 104th ASG's Financial Management Division."

Lomahan, who recently attended a prestigious "People to People

Future Leaders Summit" at John Hopkins University — an honor bestowed on only a chosen few — said the Summer Hire experience helped prepare her for the future. "This gives us a good opportunity to use skills which will be useful in the future for any job, not only jobs with the federal government."

"I'm doing a little bit of everything over at the BSB Headquarters," said Ashley Jackson, age 14, explaining that as a "floater" she is learning a variety of skills including recordkeeping, filing, how to handle a telephone directory and more.

"It's a lot of fun. It's my first experience," she said, explaining that as a slightly shy person, having supportive fellow employees has made the job easier.

What will she do with her hard-earned cash?

"I'm going to save some and buy school clothes," said Jackson. "I'm saving for my first car."

"People who don't communicate well set themselves up for all kinds of problems," said Bruner, a counselor with Hanau High School's Adolescent Substance Abuse Counseling Service, during a session on enhancing communication skills. "Effective communication brings good things — success at work, a paycheck. ..." This includes both verbal and non-verbal communication, 80 percent of which forms the basis of most interaction, he said, citing statistics.

Improving communication skills is vital both on the job and in one's personal life, Bruner told the Summer Hire employees.

Providing youths with an enlightening summer experience has been especially important in light of the added pressures put on families by the long deployment of Soldiers to Iraq.

"It's been a tough year. I think there's been a lot of stress and tension — it just wears on your nerves," said Bruner.

Besides developing better communication skills, youths learned about conflict resolution, building positive relationships in the workplace, peer pressure, substance abuse prevention and how to dress for success.

At the end of the training, which runs throughout July and early August during the Summer Hire period of June 28 to Aug. 6, participants will receive recognition for their efforts during an awards ceremony.

"We'll also conduct a Summer Hire survey to use as feedback for next year's program," said Tucker-Oppermann.

Looking back on Iraq mission

Former brigade commander reviews lessons learned for missions to come

Editor's note: This is the second of a two-part series looking back on America's first year in Iraq.

By David Ruderman

104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

Col. Gregg F. Martin, former commander of the Hanau-based 130th Engineer Brigade, looked back on lessons learned in Iraq before moving on to duty as deputy G-3 with U.S. Army Europe Headquarters in mid-July.

One conclusion that leaders drew from the Army's experience in Iraq, a counterintuitive insight according to Martin, is the critical role of headquarters units in enabling complex operations to be conducted swiftly, simultaneously and successfully. He adjured leaders to think critically about the commonly held view that organizations necessarily work best with flattened hierarchies.

"The role of the HQ is extremely valuable. You hear it a lot these days, and in the business world in particular, but when you're in a war like this, those HQs are critical. Without them you are creating little HQs out of hide to command and control at different locations. You have to be cautious about reducing the number of HQs."

HQs pool expertise and experience, and centralize the access to information with the capability of communicating it rapidly throughout the force on the ground, he said.

"There's always pressure to downsize, reduce and be more efficient, but in a war in particular ... in peacetime there are probably lots of ways to reduce HQs and do OK. But in a war, out there on the battlefield, the only guys you have to do things are the military folks. These organizations are very, very valuable."

HQs need to be in place to bring in specialized electrical and design groups, for instance. The foundation must be there to take advantage of their expertise "and know how to employ them effectively. You can leverage that capability," said Martin.

Training validated

"I think in general the Army training philosophy has been validated: Concentrate on the basics. Because we were well trained on the basics we could adapt and do a lot of other things; for instance, we collected up and destroyed tons and tons of enemy munitions — something we weren't expected to do."

"You have to make sure your Soldiers are trained to shoot, to move, to communicate and to do basic medical first-aid to standard. That's what's going to keep you alive. That has to be emphasized up and down the chain of command."

Iraq brought with it its share of unexpected challenges. Leaders need to respond quickly, working toward solutions and looking out for the next set of surprises. "At every point we were consistently studying the enemy, training our Soldiers on the latest tactics," said Martin.

The issue of Improvised Explosive Devices, homemade bombs that have contrib-

uted significantly to the number of Army casualties, are an example in point. "Something the Army needs to improve is finding ways to detect and neutralize explosive devices at a safe standoff distance," he said.

The Iraq experience highlighted the necessity of maintaining the Army's equipment base. "With the construction equipment, a lot of it was old, outdated and difficult to maintain. Modernization of combat and construction equipment would be very helpful." Significant amounts of machinery will be refurbished under the Theater Fleet Refurbishment Program through the General Support Center-Europe, said Martin.

Iraq will remain on the military's "things to do" for the foreseeable future, and engineers in particular will continue to be involved in rebuilding the country's infrastructure.

"The biggest challenge though is the security issue. Even under the best of circumstances an infrastructure development program of this magnitude, just the pure engineering, is very challenging, even in the United States or Germany. Then go to Iraq with its 30 years of neglect under Saddam Hussein — they don't have the legal structure, the contracting systems in place — then throw an active insurgency into the mix. It's just unbelievably hard."

"It's hard, but I'm confident. I am. I'm optimistic. There is no foregone conclusion — just like in Normandy, there are no guarantees of success. We had to do our best and it turned out well. We have to hang in there. Setting up the Iraqi security [apparatus] is clearly the way to go. It makes sense, and I think we have to hang in there with it."

The success stories of the Iraq experience shouldn't be lost in the deluge of difficulties that remain to be overcome. "One thing you don't hear about though is that the demand for electricity is increasing very rapidly, because since the end of the war the Iraqis have bought enormous quantities of electrical consumer goods. The huge and growing demand for electricity makes it very hard to stay ahead of that curve," he said.

Despite the difficulties and danger, Soldiers lived up to the demands of the mission in Iraq, said Martin. "The attitude, the morale of our deployed force was very good, very upbeat. We need to take care of our Soldiers and their families through training, incentives and letting them know what they do is



Photo courtesy of 130th Engineer Brigade
Col. Gregg F. Martin (left), then-130th Engineer Brigade commander, poses for a photo with Maj. Gen. David Petraeus, then-commander of the 101st Airborne Division, in Iraq.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Ashley Brokop

Iraqi workers construct a water treatment plant in Baghdad, Iraq, July 10. The U.S. Agency for International Development is funding the construction effort, contributing \$520 million toward water and sanitation projects that will benefit more than 11 million people.

appreciated."

What else can the Army do in addition to force stabilization and benefit plans to retain Soldiers and transform itself?

"It's unclear at this point, but then as the chief of staff of the Army said, we are an Army at war," said Martin. "People need to be ready to deploy and to fight. Do you have your dog tags on? I would say, have your dog tags on, be packed and be ready to go. That's just the reality of our Army. I would say everybody needs to be ready."

Historical landmarks

The end of Martin's tenure was marked by two additional landmarks. On the historical level he saw 130th Soldiers take part in 60th anniversary commemoration ceremonies of the D-Day Invasion, a battle in which the brigade fought before any of its present day Soldiers were born.

"We had World War II veterans meeting with our troops, who 60 years later were just back from doing what they did in Iraq — to see that linkage and connection was just incredible. What these guys did 60 years ago,

our guys did in Iraq; they really did the same missions. When you see what combat engineers do today, we do the same thing, and the combat technology is not significantly better. The old vets really appreciated being able to talk to the young ones: It was a lesson to see that we're part of something bigger than the self, and that that goes back in time."

On the personal level, as Martin and his family prepared to leave Hanau, the middle of his three sons, Patrick, enrolled for his first year at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

"One thing about the Army is that people taking care of each other is the key. We know the Army will take good care of him," he said.

In retrospect, his time at the helm seemed short, said Martin.

"We were right in the middle of everything. I feel very fortunate to have been part of it. It seems unreal to be leaving, when I feel like I've hardly been there. I've really appreciated the support of the military community and our German partners; it's really been great. And the support of our spouses has been fantastic. I can't believe it's over."

414th BSB – Büdingen, Hanau

Soldiers returning home in droves from Iraq

By Marie J. DeLopez
414th Base Support Battalion Marketing Office

A large group of Soldiers from the 1st Armored Division's 4th Brigade returned to Fliegerhorst Kaserne July 19.

They were welcomed home and released to friends and family members in a hangar on the airfield on a surprisingly warm summer evening.

Maj. Blake Burslie, 4th Brigade rear detachment commander, praised the Soldiers for their great accomplishments in laying the foundation for the future of the new Iraq, and thanked spouses and family members for their constant support during the 15-month deployment.

The main body of brigade Soldiers are continuing to return.

Families were excited, many standing with eyes filled with tears of joy as they waited for their Soldiers. After the brief welcome home speech they were relieved to embrace their loved ones. The Soldiers had missed births



Photo by Marie J. DeLopez

Members of the Schrote family embrace during a Hanau homecoming.

and birthdays, children's baseball games, graduations and proms while they fought

thousands of miles away.

Joyful family members ran from the bleach-

ers and onto the hangar floor to embrace their Soldiers. Small children flung their arms around their deeply missed parents. New fathers stood amazed at the sight of children they beheld for the first time.

"This is just great; I can't believe it myself," said 127th Aviation Brigade's Command Sgt. Maj. Melvin Moton, his youngest daughter, Lisa, hanging from his pinkie. "It feels good to be home — you can't describe it."

"I'm just thankful he's finally home and safe," said Carolyn Schrote as she reunited with her husband, Lt. Col. James Schrote, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 501st Aviation Regiment. "He's a very active dad and the kids and I have missed him dearly."

The rest of the evening was a rising tide of emotion with Soldiers and families experiencing one knot in the throat after the other.

"Daddy, if you have time tomorrow, can you play baseball with me?" asked one pre-school-age boy as he walked to the parking lot, finally getting to take his father home.



Photos by Midori VanBrunt

Changing command in Büdingen

Soldiers pass the colors during the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, change of command ceremony on Büdingen's Armstrong Barracks July 22. Lt. Col. John A. Peeler assumed command from Lt. Col. Charles E. Williams. Soldiers recently returned from Iraq after serving for 15 months on the front lines of Operation Iraqi Freedom. See next issue for more photos from homecoming celebrations. Photo below: Members of the 1st Armored Division Band play marching music as they make their way across the parade field at Armstrong Barracks.

